

Police Chief Pleads Guilty

Other defendants plea to gang activity, weapons, murder, rape, and theft charges

Michael Capriglione, Chief of police for the Town of Newport, has pled guilty to charges stemming from official misconduct. In May 2018, Capriglione ordered the deletion of a surveillance video, which depicted him striking another vehicle in the parking lot of Newport Police Department while driving a departmental vehicle. Capriglione pled guilty to Official Misconduct and Careless Driving and will be sentenced following a pre-sentence investigation by the Court. Deputy Attorney General Sonia Augusthy, director of the DOJ Office of Civil Rights and Public Trust, prosecuted the case, which was investigated by the Delaware State Police and Frank Robinson, on behalf of the DOJ.

An 18-year-old member of the Shoot to Kill (STK) gang pled guilty to gun and gang charges. Deputy Attorney General Mark Denney secured the plea from Chaz Cowan of New Castle to 3 counts of Possession of a Firearm by a Person Prohibited and 1 count each of Illegal Gang Participation, and Non-Compliance with Bond Conditions. In February 2018, Cowan, barred from having a gun because of a felony conviction of Possession of a Firearm by a Juvenile in 2015, appeared in a YouTube music video holding a gun. While out on bail in a few months later, Cowan violated a no contact order with co-defendants and cellular phones in November 2018 when police arrested him during a car stop. Police arrested Cowan again in January 2019 after a search warrant – conducted in response to a number of shootings – turned up firearms as well as pictures of Cowan holding at least two of them. A Superior Court judge immediately sentenced Cowan to 1 year in prison, followed by 6 months of either home confinement or work release, then 1 year of probation.

A man and woman have pled guilty to Murder by Abuse or Neglect First Degree in the 2018 beating death of 15-month-old Chosen Smith. Deputy Attorneys General Jim Kriner and Diana Dunn secured the pleas from Tameke Wright, 23 and Lavar Harris, 38, in Superior Court. The couple were babysitting the child in February 2018 when they drove the child to the hospital and reported that he had fallen off a futon. The child died minutes after arriving at the hospital. Upon examination, it was discovered that the child had abrasions and bruises all over his body as well as abusive head injuries, including a fractured skull. The Medical Examiner ruled the death a homicide as a result of blunt force trauma. Detective Devon Jones of the Wilmington Police Department arrested Wright and Harris the following week. Both defendants face a sentence of 15 years to life in prison when sentenced in June. DOJ paralegal Jayna Quillen and victim services specialist Bettina Jones also participated in the prosecution.

A 55-year-old Dover man is awaiting sentencing for raping a teenager. Tyrone Evans pled no contest in Superior Court to Rape Fourth Degree and Unlawful Sexual Contact Second Degree. In June 2018, Evans exposed himself to the teenager and began having sexual intercourse as the victim slept. A Superior Court judge will sentence Evans in March; there is no minimum prison time but the crimes carry as much as 18 years in prison. Deputy Attorney General Kathleen Dickerson prosecuted the case with assistance from Detective Dale Boney of the Dover Police Department, administrative assistant Penny Mannering, social worker Lorraine Freese, paralegal Sue Balik and investigator LaVincent Harris.

A nurse who worked at Brookdale Assisted Living Center in Hockessin has pled guilty to stealing from a resident of the facility. Deputy Attorney General Lisa Barchi of the DOJ Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) secured the plea from Jennifer Wilson, 31, of Wilmington. In October 2018, Wilson went into a resident's dresser drawer and took \$180 and a

credit card, which Wilson used to purchase a television. Wilson pled guilty in the Court of Common Pleas to Theft Under \$1,500 and was immediately sentenced by a judge to 1 year of probation, ordered to pay \$560.94 in restitution, and reported to the Adult Abuse Registry. Wilson was referred to the Division of Professional Regulation where disciplinary action on her nursing license is pending. Corporal Joshua Walther of the Delaware State Police investigated the case with assistance from MFCU chief special investigator Bruce Pinkett.